

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 07125 01 OF 02 171635Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----171642Z 042251 /42
O 171324Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3455

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 7125

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI FROM BOMBAY 17 MAY 77
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE
CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 BOMBAY 1130

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: TECH, IN
SUBJ: NUCLEAR AFFAIRS

1. DURING A PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN CONGEN AND IAEC CHAIRMAN
SETHNA AT SMALL DINNER LAST EVENING (MAY 16) FOLLOWING POINTS WERE
DISCUSSED.

2. RE-RACKING - SETHNA WAS MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE ERDA RESPONSE
(STATE 109391) TO THE IAEC COMMENTS ON THE INITIAL USG PROPOSAL
FOR THE STUDY OF THE POSSIBILITY OF RE-RACKING THE TARAPUR STORAGE
POOLS WITH HIGH DENSITY, NEUTRON-ABSORBING MATERIALS. HE
CONSIDERED THE ERDA RESPONSE BOTH TIMELY AND SUBSTANTIVELY
GOOD. HE CHARACTERIZED IT AS MEETING OUTRIGHT 90 PERCENT OF
IAEC PROBLEM WITH THE INITIAL PROPOSAL. HE WAS ESPECIALLY
PLEASED TO SEE THAT GE HAS DROPPED ITS REQUEST FOR A SEPARATE
AGREEMENT PROVIDING PROTECTION AGAINST WHAT HE CONSIDERED AS
EXTREMELY REMOTE POSSIBILITIES. HE SAID HE HAS REFERRED
THE REVISED ERDA PROPOSAL TO HIS LEGAL DEPARTMENT WITH A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 07125 01 OF 02 171635Z

STRONG WARNING AGAINST ANY NITPICKING. HE HOPED TO GETO
BACK TO MET TODAY WITH A RESPONSE, AS HE IS MOST ANXIOUS
TO GET THE STUDY UNDER WAY. HE BELIVES THAT THIS
MANIFESTATION OF A COOPERATIVE SPRIT BY THE UNITED STATES
WILL GREATLY HELP THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE FUEL SUPPLY TALKS
THAT SHOULD GET UNDER WAY SOON. HE CAN USE THIS STUDY
TO DEMONSTRATE TO HIS CRITICS IN NEW DELHI THAT THE UNITED

STATES IS ACTIVELY HELPING TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT FUEL SUPPLY/WASTE DISPOSAL DILEMMA.

3. FRIDAY THE 13TH APPROACH. CONGEN ASKED WHETHER SETHNA HAS HAD ANY DIFFICULTY IN CONVERTING OUR FRIDAY THE 13TH TALKS ON TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY INTO NON-TALKS, IN VIEW OF THE CANCELLATION OF AMBASSADOR KEWAL SINGH'S SCHEDULED CALL ON THE DEPARTMENT. HE SAID THAT AMONG PEOPLE IN NEW DELHI, ONLY ONE OFFICIAL V. SHANKAR THE SUCCESSOR TO P.N. DHAR AS BOTH A MEMBER OF THE INDIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION AND AS SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, HAD INQUIRED ABOUT THESE TALKS. SETHNA SAID THAT HE EXPLAINED TO SHANKAR THAT THERE HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN A CHANGE IN USG TACTICS FOR INITIATING THE TALKS ON TARAPUR AND NONPROLIFERATION. HE SAID THAT HE EXPLAINED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS EVIDENTLY CONCLUDED THAT THE BASIS ON WHICH THESE TALKS WERE TO BE LAUNCHED WAS TOO NEBULOUS, THEREFORE IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO DEVELOP A MORE STRUCTURED PLAN FOR THE TALKS SO IT HAD WISELY DECIDED TO POSTPONE ITS INITIATIVE. HE SAID HE ADVISED SHANKAR THAT HIS CHANGE SHOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO THE GOI BECAUSE THERE REALLY WAS NOT A SUFFICIENT BASIS IN THE US PROPOSAL FOR THE BROAD-RANGING TALKS WE APPARENTLY WANT. HE SUPPOSED THAT AMBASSADOR GOHEEN WOULD BRING WASHINGTON'S LATEST THINKING, AND AFTER TAKING SOUNDINGS WITH INDIAN OFFICIALS HE WOULD TRY TO FIND A WAY TO BRIDGE THE TWO POSITIONS. IT WAS AT THIS STAGE THAT SETHNA THOUGHT THAT A WRITTEN AGENDA FOR THE DISCUSSIONS COULD BE PUT FORTH. HE SAID HE WOULD URGE BOTH MEA AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TO GIVE THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR EARLY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 07125 01 OF 02 171635Z

ACCREDITATION SO THAT HIS WORK ON THE ATOMIC ENERGY PROBLEM WOULD NOT BE DELAYED BY FORMALITIES OF DIPLOMATIC PRACTICES.

4. TIMING - SETHNA SAID HE IS UNDECIDED REGARDING THE PACE FOR THE TALKS. ON ONE HAND, HE IS VERY ANXIOUS TO GET THIS EXERCISE MOVING SO THAT HIS FUEL SUPPLY AND WASTE STORAGE PROBLEMS CAN BE RESOLVED DEFINITELY. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE DOES NOT WANT TO RUSH THE TALKS FOR FEAR THAT SUCH A TACTIC MIGHT BE SELF-DEFEATING. WHAT WORRIES HIM IN THIS REGARD IS THE OLD "LAST QUESTION" PROPOSITION. MANY INDIAN OFFICIALS, HE SAYS, DO NOT SEE HOW THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION CAN CARRY ON EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS DESIGNED TO SET FUEL SUPPLY OVER THE LIFE OF THE TARAPUR REACTORS BEFORE THE US CONGRESS GIVES ITS REACTION TO THE NONPROLIFERATION PROPOSALS. SPECIFICALLY SOME INDIAN OFFICIALS WONDER HOW INDIA COULD ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES BEFORE THE NONPROLIFERATION LEGISLATION EMERGES FROM CONGRESS WITHOUT RUNNING THE RISK THAT THE CONGRESS

WILL MAKE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES WHICH WOULD FORCE THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION TO GO BACK TO THE INDIANS TO TRY TO TOUGHEN UP ANY AGREEMENT REACHED EARLIER. IN THIS REGARD, THESE INDIAN OFFICIALS NOTE THAT MANY CONGRESSMEN SUCH AS GLENN, ANDERSON, RIBICOFF HAVE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR INDIA TO COMPLY WITH. THESE INDIAN OFFICIALS PREFER TO WAIT UNTIL THE CONGRESS ACTS ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S PROPOSALS BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE A DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT. CONGEN MADE THE POINT THAT THE PRESIDENT STOOD A BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING HIS LEGISLATION THROUGH IF HE CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT COUNTRIES LIKE INDIA WILL COOPERATE WITH IT SO THERE ARE ALSO GOOD REASONS TO GET THE NEGOTIATIONS MOVING BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IS COMPLETE.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 07125 02 OF 02 171736Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----171746Z 043347 /41
O 171324Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3456

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 7125

EXDIS

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 BOMBAY 1130

5. RUSSIAN ROLE - SETHNA SAID THAT ANOTHER COMPLICATING FACTOR IS THAT MANY PEOPLE IN NEW DELHI BELIEVE THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE PREPARED TO STEP IN TO THE BREACH ON THE SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM FOR TARAPUR IF THE AMERICANS PULL OUT. THESE INDIAN OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD ATTEMPT TO USE THEIR SUPPLY OF FUEL FOR TARAPUR AS A DEVICE FOR EXTENDING SAFEGUARDS IN INDIA BEYOND THE FACILITIES FOR WHICH THE SPECIAL NUCLEAR MATERIAL IS PROVIDED. CONGEN NOTED THAT IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN WHAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD ASK FOR AND THAT THEY COULD WELL BE TOUGHER AT LEAST AS REGARDING FULL FUEL CYCLE SAFEGUARDS THAN WE HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST. SETHNA ADMITTED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIGURE OUT JUST WHAT THE RUSSIANS INTEND TO DO. HE NOTED THAT THEY QUICKLY CAME THROUGH TO FILL THE HEAVXC

WATER VOID LEFT BY CANANDA. THEY RUSHED 55 METRICK TONS OUT
HERE AND THEN LEFT THWIAEA TO WORK OUT EX POST FAKIO
SAFEGUARDS. SETHNA EMPHASIZED THAT THE IMPORTANT FACTOR
HERE IS THE PERCEPTION IN NEW DELHI THAT THE RUSSIANS
ARE PREPARED TO HELP OUT WITH TARAPUR WITHOUT IMPOSING
UNACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS. IT IS THIS PERCEPTION WITH
WHICH ONE MUST
CONTENT. HE DOUBTED THAT THE RUSSIANS
WOULD MAKE CLEAR BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF US-INDO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 07125 02 OF 02 171736Z

TALKS ON RENEGOTIATION OF TARAPUR THAT THEY WOULD BE
JUST AS TOUGH AS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION MAY BECOME.
IN HIS VIEW, HISTORY OF INDO-SOVIET COOPERATION INDICATES
THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD PROBABLY BE PREPARED TO MAKE A
DEAL WITH THE INDIANS ON THIS MATTER. HE SEEMED TO
FEEL THAT AS LONG AS TARAPUR ITSELF IS FULLY SAFEGUARDED
THAT WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE SOVIETS.

6. KHANNA MAY 16 TIMES OF INDIA STORY - SETHNA SAID
THAT K.C. KHANNA'S REPORT (BOMBAY 1115) FULLY
REFLECTS GOI'S VIEWS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN
INSTRUCTIONS TO COOPERATE WITH K.C. KHANNA TO INSURE THAT THE
FACTS N THE STORY WERE WITTY CURRENT AND ACCURATE. HE ALSO
SAID THAT KHANNA HAD BEEN GIVEN AN INTERVIEW WITH PRIME
MINISER MORARJI DESAI AND THAT THE REMARKS ABOUT INDIA'S
DETERMINATION NOT TO NEGOTIATE AWAY ITS FREEDOM IN THE
NUCLEAR FIELD WERE SPECIFICALLY ENDORSED BY THE PRIME
MINIYXER'S OFFICE. SETHNA SAID THAT WITH A FREE PRESS IN
INDIA NOW THE OLD POLICY OF RESTRICTING THE FLOW OF
INFORMATION WOULD NO LONGER WORK, THEREFORE THE GOI WILL
HAVE TO COOPERATE WITH A FEW CHOSEN JOURNALISTS IN
INSURING THAT THERE IS A REASONABLY ACCURATE AND CURRENT
FLOW OF INFORMATION TO THE PRESS ON ITS EFFORTS TO KEEP
TARAPUR PRODUCTIN ELECTRICITY AT NEAR CAPACITY. SETHNA
ASSURED ME THAT EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO RESTRAIN
THE PRESS'S ENTHUSIASM FOR OVER-DRAMATIZING THE
NEGOTIATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS EFFORT.

7. SETHNA'S OWN POSITION - SETHNA SAYS THAT HE NOW HAS
TO WORK HARDER THAN EVER IN KEEPING THE PRIME MINISTER FULLY
BRIEFED ON NUCLEAR AFFAIRS. HE BELIEVES THAT HIS POSITION IS
STRONGER THAN EVER BECAUSE "MORARJI NEEDS ME MORE THAN I
NEED HIM." HE EXPLAINED THAT WITH DIVERSE ELEMENTS IN THE
CABINET URGING EVERYTHING FROM A NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM TO
AN IMMEDIATE PNE, MORARJI NEEDS SOMEONE WHO HAS THE STATURE
TO STAND UP TO THE CABINET AND EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS OF A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 07125 02 OF 02 171736Z

MODERATE POLICY WHICH FITS INTO THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL
SCENE. SETHNA BELIVES THAT HIS OWN STANDING IN INDIA'S
SCIENFIFIC COMMUNITY AND PARTICULARLY AS THE FIRST
SCIENTIST IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY TO DEVELOP FACILITIES
FOR THE LARGE SCALE SEPARATION OF PLUTONIUM GIVES
HIM A UNIQUE ROLE. THE CONTINUATION OF THIS POSITION,
HE SAID, WILL OF COURSE DEPEND ON HIS ABILITY TO SHOW
RESULTS IN TALKS WITH COUNTRIES LIKE THE UNITED STATES
AND OF COURSE IN BRINGING INDIA'S NUCLEAR FACILITIES
ON STREAM AT A REASONABLE PACE. SIGNED COURTNEY
UNQUOTE
SCHNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR ENERGY, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE07125
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770175-0207
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770549/aaaabpvf.tel
Line Count: 239
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7c793d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2487129
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NUCLEAR AFFAIRS
TAGS: TECH, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7c793d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009